STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK
May 1, 2008

SUMMARY

This would be 2 months in a row where our Snow Surveyors could see the sample holes from the previous month. April, on the heels of a very dry March, was dry with statewide precipitation in the higher elevations of only 53% of normal statewide. It was much drier in the southwest portion where precipitation was a parched 9% of average. Northern Utah was a bit wetter, ranging from 41% on the Uintah's to 66% of average precipitation accumulation over the Weber Basin. Snowpacks have been unpredictable as well with snowmelt in southern areas ranging from 160% over southeast Utah to 187% of average on the Sevier. In the northern Utah snowmelt ranged from 56% on the Weber to 172% of normal over the Uintahs. It is possible that dust and carbon from the large Milford Flat fire distributed by wind events over some snowpacks may have accelerated melt processes. Currently, snowpacks in southern Utah range from 56% to 83% of average. While these numbers are somewhat disappointing given the fact that this entire area was well above average earlier in the year, when compared to last year (we currently have 305% to 2654% more snow this year than last), this area is in much better condition. In northern Utah, snowpacks range from 99% to 121% of average which is 312% to 596% more snow than last year at this time. In northern Utah, there remains a substantial low elevation (6000 ft to 7500ft) snowpack in some areas such as the Little Bear Lower– 659%, Ben Lomond Trail – 238%, Chalk Creek 3 – 389%, Hardscrabble – 223% and Smith & Morehouse – 181% of average. Soil moisture values are: Bear - 69%, Weber - 70%, Provo - 67%, Uintah Basin - 68%, southeast Utah - 74%, Sevier - 71%, southwest Utah - 61%, and statewide - 69% of saturation. Reservoir storage is currently at 62% of capacity statewide compared to 75% last year. General water supply conditions are near average in northern Utah and near to below average in the south. Streamflow forecasts range from 43% for the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 112% of average on Big Cottonwood Creek near Salt Lake, W.Fk. Duchesne near Hanna and the Spanish Fork near Castilla. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 12% on the Bear River to 73% over the western Uintahs.

SNOWPACK

May first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL are as follows: Bear - 103%, Weber - 121%, Provo - 121%, Uintahs - 99%, southeast Utah - 83%, Sevier - 79%, southwest Utah - 56% and the statewide figure is 105% of average. April snowmelt in southern Utah ranges from 157% to 187% of average whereas in the north, it ranges from 56% to 172% or normal. At this point in the season, snowmelt should continue unabated. Higher elevation sites in the north will likely have snow until mid June.

PRECIPITATION

Mountain precipitation during April was much below average across the entire state, ranging from a nearly nothing 9% in southwest Utah to a paltry 66% of average on both the Weber and Provo watersheds. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Apr) to 98% of average statewide and ranges from 89% over southwest Utah to 101% on the Utah Lake watershed.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 62% of capacity down 13% from May 1 of last year. Reservoirs across the State declined substantially this past year due to a very long, hot and dry summer period. There are some such as Willard Bay, Scofield, Deer Creek and the Enterprise reservoirs that have fill restrictions that will limit overall water supplies in those areas.

STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to have a wide range from below average to near average across the state of Utah this year. Forecast streamflows range from 43% on the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 112% at several northern Utah locations. Most flows are forecast to be in the 80% to 105% range.